

VZCZCXYZ0291
PP RUEHWEB

DE RUEHRB #2468/01 3451728
ZNR UUUUU ZZH (CCY CAPTION ADDED - MSI8995 - AD6C9E15 - 555)
P 111728Z DEC 05
FM AMEMBASSY RABAT
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2245
INFO RUEHAS/AMEMBASSY ALGIERS PRIORITY 3595
RUEHMD/AMEMBASSY MADRID PRIORITY 5275
RUEHNK/AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT PRIORITY 2885
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS PRIORITY 3903
RUEHTU/AMEMBASSY TUNIS PRIORITY 8511
RUEHCL/AMCONSUL CASABLANCA PRIORITY 0951
RUEAWJB/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
RUEABND/DEA WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY

UNCLAS RABAT 002468

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR INL, NEA/MAG
JUSTICE FOR OIA, AFMLS, AND NDDS
TREASURY FOR FINCEN
DEA FOR OILS AND OFFICE OF DIVERSION CONTROL
PARIS FOR DEA

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y - CAPTION ADDED

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [SNAR](#) [PGOV](#) [MO](#)
SUBJECT: 2005-2006 INTERNATIONAL NARCOTICS CONTROL STRATEGY
REPORT FOR MOROCCO PART I, DRUGS AND CHEMICAL DIVERSION
CONTROL

REF: SECSTATE 209558

I. Summary

11. Morocco continues to be a major producer and exporter of cannabis. It produced an estimated 98,000 metric tons of cannabis in 2004, providing for potential cannabis resin (hashish) production of 2,760 metric tons, according to the second joint study on cannabis released in May 2005 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Morocco's Agency for the Promotion and the Economic and Social Development of the Northern Prefectures and Provinces of the Kingdom (APDN). As of December 2005, the government of Morocco (GOM) was in the process of completing its 2005 study on cannabis production. Available information continues to indicate the United States is not a major recipient of drugs from Morocco. According to the UNODC report, Morocco in 2004 succeeded in decreasing by 10 percent its land dedicated to cannabis cultivation to 120,500 hectares, down from 134,000 hectares in 2003. The UNODC study also states that approximately 800,000 Moroccans (2.5 percent of the country's estimated 2004 population) were involved in cannabis cultivation. Morocco's efforts to combat cannabis cultivation are made more difficult by limited short-term financial alternatives for those involved in its production. Morocco is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention.

II. Status of Country

12. Morocco consistently ranks among the world's largest producers and exporters of cannabis, and its cultivation and sale provide the economic base for much of the mountainous northern region of Morocco. Only very small amounts of narcotics produced in or transiting through Morocco reach the United States. According to the UNODC report, the illicit trade in Moroccan cannabis resin generates approximately \$13 billion a year. The narcotics trade remains a large source of hard currency. Independent estimates indicate that the returns from cannabis cultivation range from \$16,400-\$29,800

per hectare (little of which goes to the growers themselves), compared with an average of \$1,000 per hectare for one possible alternative, corn.

¶3. According to EU law enforcement officials, Moroccan cannabis is typically processed into cannabis resin or oil and exported to Europe, Algeria, and Tunisia. To date, Morocco has no enterprises that use dual-use precursor chemicals, and is thus neither a source nor transit point for them. While there has been a small but growing domestic market for harder drugs like heroin and cocaine, cannabis remains the most widely used illicit drug in Morocco. Although there is no substantial evidence of widespread trafficking in heroin or cocaine, press reports suggest Latin American cocaine traffickers may have started using well-established cannabis smuggling routes to move cocaine into Europe.

III. Country Actions Against Drugs

¶4. Policy Initiatives: The GOM's partnership with UNODC in conducting the 2004 and 2003 cannabis surveys reflects Morocco's desire to compile accurate data about narcotics production and address its narcotics problem. In 2004 Morocco also launched an awareness campaign for cannabis growers alerting them to the adverse effects of cannabis cultivation for the land and informing them of alternative ways to use the land more productively.

¶5. Throughout the 1980,s, the GOM worked in conjunction with the UN to devise a response to the unique geographic, cultural and economic circumstances that confront the many people involved in the cultivation of cannabis in northern Morocco. Joint projects to encourage cultivation of alternative agricultural products included providing goats for dairy farming, apple trees, and small bee-keeping initiatives. This effort also included paved roads, modern irrigation networks, and health and veterinary clinics. In the 1990,s, the GOM continued to focus on development

alternatives in Morocco's northern provinces through the work of APDN and the Tangier Mediterranean Special Agency (TMSA). In June 2003, TMSA oversaw the groundbreaking of the centerpiece of its northern development program, the Tanger-MED port, which is set to become Morocco's primary maritime gateway to the world. To study the viability of medicinal plant substitution the GOM selected Taounate as the site for the construction of the National Institute of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants (INPMA).

¶6. Accomplishments: Morocco and France agreed in 2004 to reinforce bilateral counternarcotics cooperation by deploying liaison officers to Tangiers and France. During this past year, according to both Moroccan and French police sources, their use of controlled deliveries of drugs has proven to be a very successful interdiction technique. The GOM in 2005 destroyed more than 7,000 hectares of cannabis, primarily in Larache and Taounate Provinces, and plans to destroy 10,000-25,000 hectares of land cultivated with cannabis during next year's eradication campaign. The Ministry of Interior is also in the final stages of launching a website that will provide the public with information on the government's counternarcotics efforts. Morocco has laws providing a maximum allowable prison sentence for drug offenses of 30 years, as well as fines for narcotics violations ranging from \$20,000-\$80,000. Ten years' imprisonment remains the typical sentence for major drug traffickers convicted in Morocco.

¶7. Law Enforcement Efforts: According to government statistics, Morocco in 2004 seized 318 tons of cannabis, representing a 361 percent increase over the 69 tons seized the previous year. During the same period seizures were also up for cocaine, heroin, and psychoactive drugs. Morocco claims to have arrested 22,526 Moroccan nationals and 356 foreigners in connection with drug-related offenses in 2004.

¶8. As part of a 1992 counternarcotics initiative, an estimated 10,000 police were detailed to drug interdiction efforts in the North and Rif mountains in 1995. Since then, approximately every six months, the GOM has rotated personnel into this region and continued to maintain narcotics checkpoints. Moroccan forces also staff observation posts along the Mediterranean coast, and the Moroccan Navy carries out routine sea patrols and responds to information developed by the observation posts. These efforts, however, have not changed the underlying reality of extensive cannabis cultivation and trafficking in northern Morocco.

¶9. Corruption: The GOM does not promote drug production or trafficking as a matter of policy, and it contests accusations that government officials in the northern territories are involved in the drug trade. According to Moroccan press reports, the Rabat Court of Appeal in April issued prison sentences ranging from 1 to 10 years to members of a drug trafficking ring, including 25 policemen and 7 gendarmes who were given one-year sentences for corruption.

¶10. Agreements and Treaties: Although the U.S. and Morocco do not have an extradition treaty, cooperation in judicial matters is accomplished through a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty. Morocco is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances and the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol amending the Single Convention. Morocco is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

¶11. Cultivation/Production: The center of cannabis production continues to be the province of Chefchaouen, although production has expanded north in the last two decades to the outskirts of Tangiers, west to the coastal city of Larache, and east toward Al Hoceima. According to the UNODC report, small farmers in the northern Rif region grow mostly cannabis, where an estimated 27 percent of arable land is dedicated to its cultivation. Production also occurs on a smaller scale in the Souss valley in the south. The UNODC survey found that 75 percent of villages and 96,000

farms in the Rif region cultivate cannabis, representing 6.5 percent of all farms in Morocco.

¶12. The GOM has stated its commitment to the total eradication of cannabis production, but given the economic and historical dependence on cannabis in the northern region, eradication is only feasible if accompanied by a well designed development strategy involving reform of local government and a highly subsidized crop substitution program.

Moroccan drug officials have indicated that crop substitution programs thus far appear to have made little headway in providing economic alternatives to cannabis production. The amount of cannabis production measured in 2004 suggests that the crop's cultivation has seen a steady increase over the past few years, to the detriment of other agricultural activities. The UNODC report warned that this agricultural monoculture represents an extreme danger to the ecosystem, as the extensive use of fertilizers and forest removal continues to be the methods of choice to make room for cannabis cultivation.

¶13. Drug Flow/Transit: The primary ports of export for Moroccan cannabis are Oued Lalou, Martil and Bou Ahmed on the Mediterranean coast. Most large shipments bound for Spain travel via fishing vessels or private yachts. Shipments of up to two tons increasingly are being confiscated on smaller "zodiac" speedboats that reportedly can make roundtrips to Spain in one hour. Smugglers also continue to transport cannabis via truck and car through the Spanish enclaves of Ceuta and Melilla, and the Moroccan port of Tangiers, crossing the Straits of Gibraltar by ferry. According to the UNODC, Spain still accounts for the world's largest portion of cannabis resin seizures (57 percent of global seizures and 75 percent of European seizures in 2001). The Moroccan press reported that some 800 tons of Moroccan cannabis resin were

seized in Spain in 2004. Given its proximity to Morocco, Spain is a key transfer point for Europe-bound Moroccan cannabis resin.

¶14. Domestic Programs: The GOM is concerned about signs of an increase in domestic heroin and cocaine use, but does not aggressively promote reduction in domestic demand for these drugs or for cannabis. It has established a program to train the staffs of psychiatric hospitals in the treatment of drug addiction. In partnership with UNODC, the Ministry of Health is exploring the relationship between drug use and HIV/AIDS infection in Morocco. Moroccan civil society and some schools are active in promoting counternarcotics use campaigns.

IV. U.S. Policy Initiatives and Programs

¶15. U.S. Policy Initiatives: U.S. policy goals in Morocco are to enhance Morocco's counter narcotics capability through training in law enforcement techniques and to promote the GOM's adherence to its obligations under relevant bilateral and international agreements. U.S.-supported efforts to strengthen anti-money-laundering laws and efforts against terrorist financing may also contribute to the GOM's ability to monitor the flow of money from the cannabis trade.

¶16. Bilateral Cooperation: According to Moroccan narcotics officials, USG-provided border security equipment, particularly new scanners in main ports, improved the effectiveness of security measures at entry points, which directly contributed to increased drug seizures in 2004. Morocco and the U.S. have also begun to expand cooperation on drug investigations of mutual interest. The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which covers Morocco from its Paris office, has enhanced its engagement with the Moroccan National Police, including discussing ways to increase training visits to the US by Moroccan narcotics officials and by US officials to Morocco. DEA officials conducted three trips to Morocco in the 2005. During the December 2005 visit, U.S. and Moroccan officials discussed ways in which the two governments can further their mutual cooperation.

¶17. Road Ahead The United States will continue to monitor

the narcotics situation in Morocco, cooperate with the GOM in its counternarcotics efforts, and, together with the EU, provide law enforcement training, intelligence, and other support where possible.

Riley